

**ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IC
June 11, 2012
EXHIBIT 3**

2021 Eleventh Avenue
Suite 1
Helena, Montana
59601-4890



1.406.443.4000
FAX 1.406.443.4042
Intrastate Toll Free
1.877.443.4000
www.mmaoffice.org
mma@mmaoffice.org

June 10, 2012

Economic Affairs Interim Committee
62nd Montana Legislature
PO Box 201706
Helena MT 59620-1706

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Economic Affairs Interim Committee,

The Montana Medical Association is pleased to provide information on what we collect and maintain on the physician workforce in Montana. Your review of what data is being collected and why it is needed is a good starting point in determining what legislative options are available to improve data quality and collection processes.

The collection of information on physicians residing in Montana has been done by the MMA for over 130 years. The type of information collected and the methods used have changed as the delivery of care by physicians evolved and new technologies emerged. The demand for more meaningful workforce data has grown as states wrestle with the challenges of meeting the health care needs of their citizens and addressing health care workforce shortages. An investment was made by the MMA in 2005 to build a SQL (Structured Query Language) database that would allow for the access and manipulation of the data being collected in more useful ways. We are proud to provide meaningful data to legislators, state agencies and others in support of establishing sound health care policies and regulations and bringing resources to Montana that will lead to better health outcomes for Montanans.

The MMA strives to have an accurate database recognizing the importance of good, reliable information on which to base decisions. Staff achieves this by taking the following labor intensive steps throughout the year:

- Cross check MMA database information with other databases, including Montana Board of Medical Examiners and the American Medical Association (annually).
- Send informational biography forms to all physicians to ensure their information is accurate (annually).
- Obtain information on new physician licensees from Montana Board of Medical Examiners (quarterly).
- Continually update data proactively. Seek out updates through monitoring of media information, querying MMA Board members on physicians practicing within their location releases, reviewing web based information and hospital directories.
- Continually update data responsively. Obtain updates from the American Medical Association on physicians leaving Montana or entering the state. Make updates upon physician notification and based on mail returns from multiple, year-round mailings.

Currently, the MMA database contains information in the following data fields:

Physician Workforce Data Collected by Montana Medical Association*	
DEMOGRAPHICS	
Date of Birth	
Marital Status	
Gender	
RESIDENCE	
Primary residence- MT or outside of MT	
EDUCATION AND TRAINING	
Professional Education, location and year graduated	
Medical Specialty	
Specialty Board Certification	
Montana State Licensure Number	
EMPLOYMENT	
Beginning date of practice in MT	
Active, inactive, retired	
County of business location	
Telemedicine, Locum Tenens	
Independent, Partner, Group or Hospital based	
Affiliation	
Contact Information	
Home and Business	

* Data updated annually on a voluntary basis

The MMA does face an ongoing challenge in collecting specific information on practice details. Additionally, the annual biographical information is voluntary. While we will continue to improve our internal processes, taking a more collaborative approach to collecting and analyzing physician workforce data could be more effective. As indicated in the attached letter from MMA Legislative Chair, Carter Beck, M.D., we support the establishment of a physician data clearinghouse at the Board of Medical Examiners (BoME). Collecting information at the time of a physician application or renewal simply makes sense. Requiring licensees to answer questions on practice location, work activities and distribution, and future employment plans would provide the needed data that will be highly useful in developing and implementing statewide strategies that will encourage competent physicians to locate and practice in all areas of Montana. It will provide accurate information for grant writing purposes and to gain access to needed resources and recruitment tools for rural facilities.

This is a close fit with the BoME mission to protect the safety and health of Montana health care consumers. We need your assistance to grant the BoME the legislative authority to collect this information or to break through the barriers presented by the umbrella organization, Department of Labor and Industry. The MMA will work with you, the BoME and other key stakeholders on determining the necessary data points to collect and how best to analyze the collected information.

Thank you for this opportunity. Please contact Jean Branscum, MMA Executive Vice President, at jean@mmaoffice.org or by telephone at 406/443-4000 should additional information be needed.